NEXT MEETING

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Meetings are held at the West Santa Rosa Baptist Church, 3884 Sebastopol Rd, Santa Rosa. Go west on Highway 12 from Santa Rosa, turn left at the light at Wright Road (Fulton), go one block and turn left on Sebastopol Road. The church is on the right-hand side. We are in the building to the right of the Sanctuary.

MEETINGS ARE GENERALLY HELD ON THE THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH at the same time and place. The meeting starts at 7:30 PM.

MEETING ACTIVITIES

Software Demonstrations
- First Word Plus
- * Word Perfect
- * Gauntlet!

MIDI MAZE

Anyone wishing to play Midi Maze should bring their computer and set up in the big side room.. I hope someone beats the stuffing out of "Doctor Death".

In addition to your computer, please bring:

* An extension cord/terminal strip
* A three-prong to two-prong adapter
* Joystick
* Midi cables if you have any - there will be extras if you don't have any.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jim Weasleberry:	President
Greg Corellware:	Vice President
Tom Harpham:	Treasurer
Cathleen Lefevre:	Membership
Wes Malespino:	Secretary
Stewart Warner:	Disk Librarian
Andy LeFevre:	Asst. Librarian
Jerry Mc Bride:	Newsletter Editor
Dave Filipello:	Co-Editor

ATTENTION PROGRAMMERS!!!

Bring your programs to the next meeting and demonstrate them at the programmer's SIG. For the programmers' SIG to be successful, we need help from you. Bring ideas for the future meetings. What direction would you like the SIG to go in? I am thinking that demonstrations/tutorials of public domain languages (C, Assembly, and perhaps FORTH) might be desirable. If you use any or would like this let us know at the meeting or call if you can't make it.

Greg Lewis 829-5601

WE NEED FOLKS TO BRING COMPUTERS TO THE MEETING.

If you can bring your computer, call Greg Correll at 575-3527. Remember, if you bring your computer, you get five free blank disks, or two free club disks!

BEGINNERS' SIG

Jerry Mc Bride will demonstrate how to use the control panel to select your own desktop colors, and how to set up and extra drive icon (ram disk). The focus will be that the control panel allows you to set up extra drives permanently. The new IntraRam ramdisk will also be demonstrated. This will be a great demo for those who would like to master the desktop.

NEW ST BASIC DIFFERENCES

A list of differences between the original and the new ST BASIC will be given out at the meeting.

IN THIS ISSUE

NOTICE
EXPIRING MEMBERSHIPS

If your membership expired in October, this will be the last newsletter you will receive!

To Maintain your membership, mail $15 to the club or bring it to the meeting

THANKS!

ST ACE MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATIONS

The following memberships expire in November. Newsletters are provided for one month after expiration.

Eric Anderson, Randall Bancroft, Paul Chinn, Mark Coomes, David Durfee, Ching Li, Frank & Margaret Linnell, Benoit Menendez, Tim Moore, Marshall Palmer, Chris Robertson, Rusty Sims, Dan Smith, Gary Souza, Warren Unck, Patrick Winegar.

You can renew your membership by paying $15 at the meeting, or in Software 1st or by mailing it to the P.O. Box, Attn. Membership. One additional newsletter will be sent after expiration before dropping you. Each month we will print a list of expiring memberships. The date is printed on your label if you want to renew in advance.
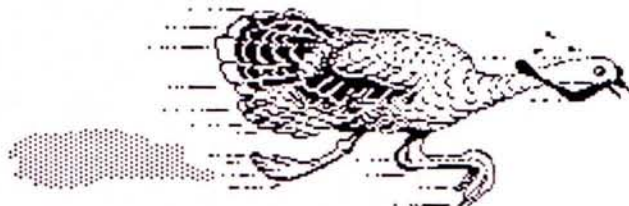
PC PURSUIT - Unlimited off-hour BBS access - only $25 per month.

This article reprinted from START magazine

For a flat $25 per month, PC PURSUIT lets you make an unlimited number of long-distance online connections during evenings and weekends.

This service is new from Telenet, a major reduced-rate long distance online access service. PC Pursuit can be used from nearly 17,000 local telephone exchanges in 25 major cities. It's the most affordable way yet to get online with bulletin boards, specialized databases and major information services all over the U.S.

PC Pursuit operates at 300 and 1200 baud, 24 hours a day. Business hour rates are $10.50 or $14 hourly, depending upon your access location. There is also a one-time registration fee of $25.

All PC Pursuit service charges are billed directly to your Visa, Mastercard, or American Express card, making it equally easy to use PC Pursuit at home, at work, or on the road. The service also operates its own BBS for users to exchange operating tips. Telenet's Control Center provides 24-hour staffing to ensure reliable data transmission.

PC PURSUIT Telenet Building 12490 Sunrise Valley Drive Reston, VA 22096

Registration & Information (Voice): (800) 835-3638
Service and Billing (Voice): (800) 336-3374
PC Pursuit Exchange BBS: (703) 689-3561
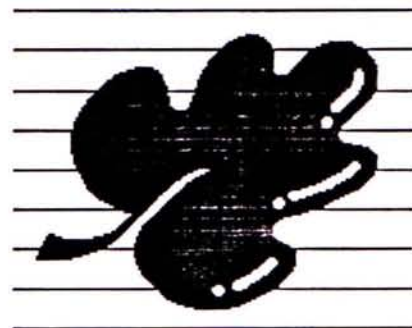
AUTUMN

INTER OFFICE MEMO

MAKING MONEY WITH YOUR ST

by Patricia McConnel, ST INFORMER, No. 4, Sept.'87, pgs. 9 & 26, with additional commentary by Therese & Wesley Malespino.

Last month, Patricia McConnel began a survey of the kinds of businesses that can be run from home with a computer. This month she focused on some businesses that require perhaps more training and background than just word processing and mailing list maintenance, but prove quite lucrative, stating for example, the following:

"**Bookkeeping & Accounting:** Like word processing, bookkeeping and accounting are widely marketable services because any business needs such services, and many are too small to hire a full-time bookkeeper/accountant of their own, so they contract with independent asccounting/bookkeeping services.

Skills & expereince needed - Bookkeeping and accounting require that you are a careful, patient person with the ability to concentrate on numbers for hours every day without going bonkers... Bookkeeping is just a matter of keeping records, of putting the right numbers in the right places, and knowing which ones to add and which ones to subtract. Almost anyone can learn to keep a set of books. Many years ago I was married to a man who owned a grocery store. Records had to be kept of sales, purchases, sales tax collected, payroll and inventory. it took my husband's accountant only a couple of hours to show me what went where, and from then on I kep the books for the business, turning them over to the accountant every three months so he could do the tax returns, quarterly reports, and profit and loss statements.

Most businesses, even quite small ones, hire an accountant to do their taxes for them and o file various quarterly and yearly reports and eturns on payroll, sales tax, etc. But most accountants won't do the daily and weekly bookkeeping, or if they will, they charge so much, it isn't worth it to the small business. Yet business owners often don't like to do it themselves. So there is a niche to be filled between the business owner and the accountant, just as there was for my husband's grocery store. In many cases, a willing (or in my case, unwilling) spouse fills in.

Accounting is another matter altogether. Accountants not only keep records, they must know how to prepare tax returns and must know what taxes to pay, and when to pay them. They may prepare loan applications, profit and loss statements, statements of financial worth, and perform a variety of functions related to the financial processes of a business. Obviously, accounting is something you don't do without some traniing. If you have a background in accounting, or are willing to get one, this can be a very lucrative field for an independent contractor.

How to learn: Bookkeeping can be learned by studying a basic bookkeeping test, having an accountant show you how to do it, buying an accounting program and learning how to use it, or by taking a class.... Accounting will require that you take college level classes. the level at which you want to begin your career, and how much training you need, depends on the size and complexity of the businesses you want to serve. Although you can become an accountant without getting a degree, you may need a degree or equivalent training to become a CPA... You could do bookkeeping at home to support yourself while you pursue your accounting studies... or apprentice yourself to an accountant...

*Software needed: The word, 'accounting' is used rather loosley when it comes to computer programs, and many off-the-shelf "accounting" packages are actually bookkeeping systems, perhaps with a few accounting functions thrown in...that doesn't mean that the off-the-shelf accounting packages are a bad buy. They are just an easier approach to bookkeeping than customizing a spreadsheet (described below), and the better ones allow for customization to suit a particular business. Accounting programs vary greatly in their ease of use and flexibility, so don't buy one without reading reviews or asking your dealer for a detailed description of how they work and what the best and worst features are. Having said all this, I must tell you that financial planner, Martha Yungk, who uses many accounting and financial programs, told me that there isn't a single accounting package available for the ST at this time that she feels comfortable recommending. She too feels that the best

software tools therefore for professional accountants are the spreadsheets." (We must comment here too the famous adage, of 'garbage in, garbage out'. Know what you want to design basically and what result you expect before randomly using a new program. I can vouch myself for the many headaches of not doing just that! Many people like myself may hate accounting but can't avoid it, so be patient, analyze your needs, and read some reviews first, as this author later also suggests.)

"Spreadsheet programs are harder to learn but more flexible and functional. These programs are formatted in columns and rows... with any width you desire; equations can be entered at any location that will automatically perform any mathematical function you need and display the result where you want it; and data from one form can be retrieved by the program to be used in another form or in a report.... VIP Professional (GEM version) is the most sophisticated spreadsheet avaialble for the ST. It is a Lotus 1-2-3 clone and will even read 1-2-3 files. It is copy protected however... You may need a 1040ST or 520ST with a megabyte upgrade to handle its RAM requirements; and a NLQ printer with a wide carriage for professional looking, extra wide reports. If you handle accounts with voluminous records, a hard disk is essential.

You can find customers almost anywhere and watch the local newspaper for announcements of business openings. Get a business phone, list it in the yellow pages; leave your card and introductory flyers... In later issues, I'll write more about marketing."
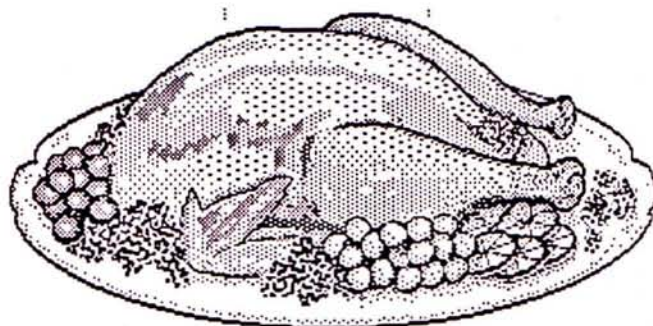
Commentary: Patricia McConnel elaborates further on the merits of the ST for businesses such as Tax Consulting & Financial Planning; recommending THE TAX ADVANTAGE (Double Eagle Software) for tax consulting, and ISGUR PORTFOLIO (a stock tracking program with a built in modem program, through Batteries Included) and LOGISTICS (combined spreadsheet, time management, data base & graphics) for the latter. She will be surveying more businesses and looking into marketing strategies in future issues. Perhaps we should give her a hand by sending comments/suggestions c/o the ST Informer and into our own renown ST ACE.

There are so many creative small or home based businesses she could add to her list. Both of us have found the ST to be enormously helpful for our needs, in particular for the day to day work involved with my nonprofit consulting business, Sonoma Social Research i.e. research, grantwriting, correspondence, budgets, Board ByLaws, other Board and Organizational
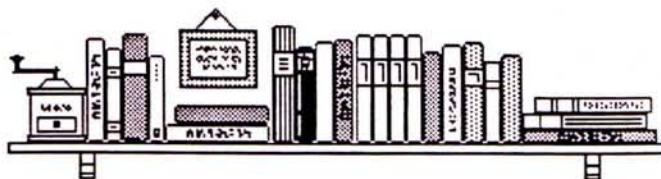
Development materials, Press Releases, fundraising mailers, newsletters and more. Nonprofits are much neglected by the ST market. They, even more so than small businesses, need more reasonably priced and easier to use computer systems. Many nonprofits, being community services dedicated to human service, have great fear and ignorance of the merits of modern computers; or on the other hand are too gullible and want some fancy computer, way over their budget and out of their (or their staff's and volunteers') range of ability. Atari needs to gear much more attention to the needs of small business, consulting and nonprofits. Apple gained much by catering to schools and to some nonprofits; Atari can do the same and better, since, really in my opinion, the ST is superior and easier to use. Through my consulting/fundraising work for nonprofits, I formally requested Atari for a new system for a nonprofit group home agency in San Joaquin County, and was pleasantly surprised by a most positive response; so I do feel they are open to exploring new areas. And I am deeply grateful on behalf of that agency, who not only can use it for correspondence, record keeping and state reports, but also to offer their teenage clients some valuable skills and recreation.

In nonprofits, most managers, staff and volunteers have little time and patience for non-user-friendly systems in the midst of their overloaded social service framework. The ST is ideal but more appropriate software marketing is needed to meet the growing demand for small businesses and nonprofits alike to document and account for everything in an efficient manner. Club members should share their experience and expertise in the ST ACE newsletter with more examples of innovative usage for small businesses enterprises or make suggestions on particular program improvements needed in their field.

ST ACE

computer or if you haven't even taken yours out of the box yet this is a good compliment to the user's manual. For people in your family who just want to use the computer for word processing but are intimidated using this plus STWRITER Elite with it's beginner section in the manual is a good way to get started.

ST ACE Public Domain

Each month this section will list the disks which are currently available, notices regarding errors on previous disks, and previews of new disks. Remember, buy four disks and get a fifth one free.

LOOK WHAT'S COMING!

ST WRITER - Version 2.3 Now Supports GEM

This simple wordprocessor is probably the most user friendly and yet powerful Public Domain one available for the ST. While some editing still takes longer than 1rst Word, there are also some features not available on that program (e.g. greater variety of font styles, printing multiple copies, printing without saving, and the ability to transfer files directly form 8-bit Atari computers.) ST WRITER's effectiveness has been enhanced now by adding GEM compatibility which allows you to add desk accessories such as online spellcheckers as well as making file manipulation and some editing possible with the mouse. ST WRITER is a fast reliable product that many users call their first choice. It's manual is unusually clear and is excellent for the first time user of any wordprocessor. Included here is also:
+ELVERT.PRG -Use to change STWRITER files to 1rst Word compatible files.
+EASEL.PRG -Great solution to that awful green desktop.(this file is in the AUTO folder) These programs will run in all resolutions although low resolution is not very desirable for a wordprocessor.

ST ACE DISK #40 - Christmas Disk

This disk contains a great demo from Audio Light Inc. with good Christmas pictures and beautiful musical accompaniment. Just click on 01XMAS.PRG and follow the easy menu. Also included is a folder labelled MUSTUDIO.XMA containing several old favorite Christmas songs for owners of Music Studio. The Demo must be run in low resolution.

ST ACE Disk #41 - Tour of the Desktop -
This is a disk for pure beginners showing how to use the mouse, menus, windows etc. It has little to offer users familiar with their machine but if you are trying to get your mate interested in the

DISKS AVAILABLE BY MAIL ORDER:

* ST WRITER - Version 1.70. This is a brand new, greatly enhanced version of the original ST Wordprocessor including new documentation and references that will aid you in using this program.

* ST ACE Disk #1 - D.E.G.A.S. A collection new pictures and fonts for this excellent program by Tom Hudson. You don't have D.E.G.A.S.? Also include d is a program which will transfer these files to NEOCHROME format for viewing.
* ST ACE Disk #3 - Utilities, A Collection of 15 useful programs plus additional computer documentations including RAMDISKS, sound demos, calculator accessory, a copy program for some protected disks, a disk library program, BREAKOUT, ELIZA, and more.

* ST ACE Disk #4 - Monochrome Games & Graphics, A disk provided exclusively for the monochrome computer owner. Includes digitized photos, Megaroids compu ter game, desk accessories, etc.

* ST ACE Disk #5 - Games & Demos, Some of the best demos out on the market plus Checkers, a maze accessory, parachute game, blackjack, and more.

* ST ACE Disk #6 - Utilities, Desk accessory calendar, disk directory print accessory, clock, graphics compressor, address book program, and clu es and solutions to PAWN and SUNDOG, etc.

* ST ACE Disk #7 - Basic, A collection of basic games, utilities, and graphics including biorhythm, star charts, financial package, adventure game s, internal clock program, and more.

* ST ACE Disk #8 - Miscellaneous, Includes fractals, print spooler, graphics demos, maze game, ramdisk for 1040 users, ARC modem program, labelmaker, etc.

* ST ACE Disk #9 - Amusements, Includes adventure game construction set, maze game, quiz game, Christmas pics, an index to all 1986 ST ACE disks , etc.

* ST ACE Disk #10 - Tiny Pics, 21 Pictures compressed into tiny format for viewing. Also includes a program that will uncompress pictures and change them from NEO to DEGAS format.

* ST ACE Disk #11 - Sound & Graphics, Includes picture display program, speech synthesizer,

synthesizer programs and sound demos.

* ST ACE Disk #12 - Hack, Fantasy adventure game.

* ST ACE Disk #13 - DEGAS ELITE, GDOS Fonts, Tiny loader accessory, display program and updates to manuals.

* ST ACE Disk #14 - Utilities, desktop accessory wordprocessor, calculator, extended formatter, reset-proof ramdisk, disk labeller, spelling check er, and more.
* ST ACE Disk #15 - VIP, 19 templates for use with VIP including, black book, general ledger, stocks, payroll, checkbook balancer, and more.

* ST ACE Disk #16 - Telecommunications, modem software which incorporates ASCII, XMODEM, and KERMIT transfer protocols. Disk also includes decompressi on utilities to use on programs you download.

* ST ACE Disk #17 - Games, Includes LARN-a text adventure game, missile command, advanced version of breakout, version 2.0 of Celestial Cesaers, etc.

* ST ACE Disk #18 - MONOPOLY, Plays just like the real game. Mouse driven, play up to three computer generated opponents at one time. Commercial qualit y graphics game. RUNS IN LOW RESOLUTION ONLY!!

* ST ACE Disk #19 - MUSIC STUDIO - 51 songs.

* ST ACE Disk #20 - Tiny Pics - 18 new pics and a new programmable viewer program that will allow color pics to be shown in high resolution.

* ST ACE Disk #21 - New Users - Includes many simple utilities that are musts for an ST user as well as a disk cataloger, spooler, ram disk, program that teaches users how to access desktop, etc.

* ST ACE Disk #22 - Created by Ken Williamson our Monochrome librarian. Includes Chess and Pool games. Both are extremely large games.

* ST ACE Disk #23 - PRINTMASTER - A large collection of Icons and borders for use with Printmaster.

* ST ACE Disk #24 - Misc. - Includes new printer buffer, Read Only Control panel, P.D. Version of DEGAS, graphics demos, sector editor, auto loading ramdi sk utility, etc.

* ST ACE Disk #25 - GFA Basic - A collection of GFA utilities, demos and games to introduce you to this fast new programming language.

* ST ACE Disk #26 - GAMES - Children's match up game, Wheel of Fortune, Yahtzee, Checkers, Stone Age arcade game, and more.

* ST ACE Disk #27 - Tiny Pics & Graphic Utilities - Auto loading slideshow of 15 pics in tiny format, new slideshow program (show pics in all res.), PICSWITCH

upgrade (now works in monochrome too!).

* ST ACE Disk #28 - Utilities - ASCII table accessory, new control panel, typewriter accessory, GDOS font editor, New ARC shell and ARC related utilities, Di sk editor, much more.

* ST ACE Disk #29 - GAMES - OGRE, Kids spelling game, P.D. version of arcade favorite SINISTAR, Time Bandit hints, Time Ban dits Invincible player utility, flight simulator airport files, etc.
* ST ACE Disk #30 - CAD-3D Objects/Pics Requires CAD-3D except for two Tiny pics.

* ST ACE Disk #31 - CLIP ART Holiday graphics in Tiny form. Includes TINYSTUF.PRG to convert.

* ST ACE Disk #32 - More Clip Art - Aircraft, Geisha, Mickey & Minnie, Picasso and many more. Includes Tinystuf,Tinyview, and Dslidell to manipulate and show the pics.

* ST ACE Disk #33 - Publishing Partner Utilities - Printer Drivers and new Fonts.

* ST ACE Disk #34 - More PP Utilities - Color Font editor with Docs, Helvetica Font, Icon converter to use Printmaster and some sample Printmaster Icons.

* ST ACE Disk #35 - Great Games - Best Breakout, DGDB Fantastic color maze and arcade Shoot-em-up, Simple but subtle card game, Sensori color sound game

* ST ACE Disk #36 - Utilities - Melt, Superboot, Bootmakr for GEM Autoboot, Disk mechanics to create and analyze disk formats, hard disk folder limit breaker etc.

* ST ACE Disk #37 - Monochrome Games, including Jeopardy, Krabat (a great chess game) and Runner (ST's Loderunner clone).

* ST ACE Disk #38 Education and Games, including educational games for young and old with a full featured quiz writer and spelling practice

* ST ACE Disk #39 Enhanced ST Basic with many of the bugs fixed. Disk also includes Easel ST the solution to the green screen.
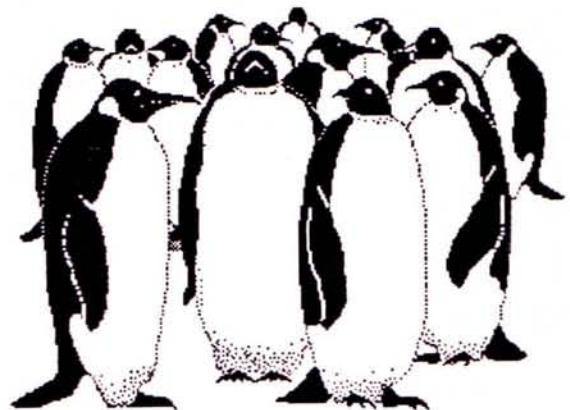
That's all for this month! Don't forget all disks are ˜5.00 each for members and $10.00 for non- members. Please remember to include an additional 75 cents for postage and handling if you purchase disks through the mail. Use the P.O. Box address listed in the front of the newsletter and mark all your requests "ATTN: Disk Librarian". Please allow about two weeks for delivery.

Please use the order form on the back page.
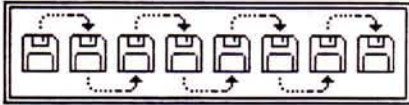
EXTENDED FORMATTING
By Jerry McBride

Getting the Most Out of Your Disks, without getting burned in the process...

Extended formatting programs are easy to use and boost the usable space on your disks. However, boosting disks too far can cause serious problems. Disks can be extended to 398 kbytes (single) and 808 kbytes (double) safely. For details, read on!

Before we get started, I need to describe a few disk basics. A floppy disk is made of the same material as a cassette tape, in a disk-shape of course. Brand-new disks are devoid of the electronic "sign-posts" your disk drive needs to find its way around the disk. So you must format the new disk, placing the required "sign posts" on it.

To understand how extended formatters work, let's look at how a disk is laid out. Your disk drive places information on the disk in concentric circles, like the rings in a tree. Each ring is a closed circle, the circles are NOT a spiral as on a phonograph record. Each circle is called a "Track" and a disk can reliably be laid out with 80 of them, numbered #0 to #79. By the way, double sided disks have 80 tracks (0 through 79) on EACH SIDE.

Each circle is broken into links. For a really ridiculous comparison, take 9 garlic sausages (that are still connected together) and lay them in a circle. That is how the information on each circular track is broken into distinct "Sectors". As with the garlic sausages, the Atari is programmed to have nine of them on each track.

Now I know what you're thinking, 'how can you have the same number of sausages in the inner circle as you have in the outer one?' Well, that's a good question. The fact is that the outer sectors are fairly long, like Bratwurst sausages, whereas the inner circle sectors are short, like smoky links. The important thing to remember is that each sector holds the same amount of information, it doesn't matter how big it is. The information is spread out more in the Bratwurst sectors, and are more tightly packed in the smoky link ones. Put another way, each takes the same number of bytes.

Now we are prepared to understand how extended formatters work. Some allow you to add one sausage, I mean sector, to each track. This boosts a single sided disk from 357 kbytes to 398 kbytes or a double sided disk from 726 kbytes to 808 kbytes. This is the only safe way to boost a disk on the Atari.

The other (and unsafe) way to boost disk space is to increase the number of circular tracks. The extra tracks are added to the inside of the others. The sectors of these inner tracks are rather small. Somewhat smaller that the smoky links on track 79, and therefore defy sausage analogy. This causes them to break the "Sausage Barrier". The implications are rather staggering, and I'm sure, obvious to all.

In truth, extended formatters can add up to two extra tracks. This is not recommended because the Atari can not reliably copy information between disks when the information is in these "illegal" tracks. In real life this means that you can not make a backup copy of a disk and expect the files to be good. This is how I lost valuable VIP files mentioned in October's "Bomb of the Month" article.

AVAILABLE EXTENDED FORMATTERS
There are two types of extended formatters available on our club disks, both are good, and we will look briefly at each.

FORMAT3
This program was written by a fellow who was learning to program in GEM. As a result, it is a veritable showcase of dialog boxes, graphic indicators, and icon symbols. It lets you choose how much "boost" you want to give a disk.

WARNING

FORMAT3 allows you to select the "illegal" sectors, 80 and 81. If you use FORMAT3, do not select these sectors. To get the maximum safe disk space, use the "79 Tracks 10 Sectors" selection.

TWISTER

Twister is a simple program, with few frills. It boosts the disk by simply adding a tenth sector on each track, as does the "safe" setting in the FORMAT3 program. Twister, however, has an advantage; it arranges the sectors in a skewed fashion, which allows information to be stored or

read faster. In most cases, the difference isn't worth writing home about. The biggest speed savings is when you copy large amounts of data (like when backing up a disk).

For those of you who are curious as to how twister works, here goes: Imagine the 80 tracks on your disk, each broken into 10 distinct portions. These sectors are all perfectly aligned with those of the other tracks, with the ones on the outer tracks being wide, and more narrow on the inner tracks. The best analogy is a pizza. Take a pizza which has been sliced so that there are 10 available slices. Draw 80 concentric circles on it, and viola! You have a disk that has been formatted in the "non-twisted" way. When the disk drive reads data from the disk, it goes to the first sector containing data in that particular file. For example, let's say the program starts on Track 20, sector 1. The read head zooms out to track 20. The disk is spinning, so the drive waits and reads the "sign post" of each sector that passes. When sector 1 starts, the disk begins reading the data in it. At the end of sector 1 there is a little electronic sign that says: "to be continued in sector 2". The drive dutifully reads sector 2, then 3, 4, 5, up to sector 10. Then the drive knows it has to go to sector 1 on the NEXT TRACK. This is where the pizza sauce thickens.

Remember that the disk is spinning like a bat out of hell. When the drive finishes reading the last sector on track 20, it moves to the next track and looks for the first sector there. By the time it gets there, however, half of the first sector has already sped past, so the drive has to wait until sector 1 comes around again - taking a whole disk revolution.

A twisted disk skews the starting point of sector 1 on each successive track. So that when the drive has finished reading sector 10 on one track, and moves down to the next, sector 1 will

arrive right on time! Neat, Huh. I'm sure you're just as excited about all this as I am.

RECOMMENDATIONS

"I like Twister a little better..."

Both FORMAT3 and Twister do a good job of extending the available space on a disk. Twister is a little faster on most things, significantly faster on big copy jobs. Twister is a lot easier to use because the programmer didn't go spaz-o with bells and whistles - a couple of mouse clicks does the job. On the other hand, because of it's simplicity, Twister does not tell you how much usable space is on your newly formatted disk (it never changes, it's 398 kbytes single and 808 kbytes double) so much for that "problem". The other thing Twister does not have is a fancy "egg-timer" thing showing you the progress of the format. It's done when it's finished, and that's it. I for one don't sit around waiting for my double-sided disks to format anyway. One disk takes a long time, so I get up and stretch my legs. T.T.F.N.
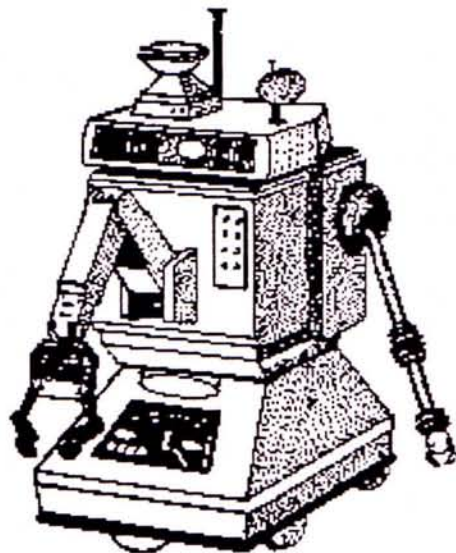
CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Annual dues for membership in the club are $15.00 per family. You may join by paying your dues to Cathleen Lefavre at the club meeting or give it to Mark Taylor at Software 1st. You may mail checks to ST ACE - Attn. Membership Chairperson, P.O. Box 3742, Santa Rosa, Ca. 95402.

Membership entitles you to:

- The monthly newsletter
- Public domain disks for $5.00
  (non-members must pay $10.00)
- 10% software discount at Software 1st

BOMB OF THE MONTH AWARD

This month's dubious award goes to none other than PUBLISHING PARTNER. Which I am now convinced is the "Glitch King" of the ST world. I have had problems with this program before. But after the November newsletter fiasco I can not contain my wrath any longer.

It started when I first acquired this program about a year ago. Little bombs here, a Molatov cocktail there. What the heck, It was a brand-new program and I expected bugs. However, the bugs usually were fatal and caused the loss of hours of work at a time.

Now, nearly a dozen newsletters later, I am still experiencing fatal bugs with Publishing Partner, even though I have a newer version. The problems started about 6:00 PM monday night, November 9. I was a day late getting the newsletter done because of the many tasks associated with selling my house, and making arrangements to buy another. After compiling the articles into P.P. (that stands for Publishing Partner, but sounds like something else that is kind of appropriate here) when I noticed the newsletter was a little "shy" of the mark. It only filled up a little more that eight pages. So, thinking I would be Mr. Smarty Pants, I decided to put a bunch of "filler" clip art in. You know, stuff a bunch of stupid and unrelated pieces of art amongst the articles. What the heck, It would have spruced up the newsletter a bit, and hey, how many of the rubes that read this rag would have noticed anyway?

So, I started reducing columns and putting in pictures, Steve Dallas (Bloom County) here, a map of the U.S. there. It was coming along fairly well. Then it happened. I went to rubber band a picture. I accidentally selected "copy from buffer" instead of "copy to buffer". A little symbol appeared that tells you the program is ready to place the picture, but I still had the picture on the screen, not the document. I tried to get out of this erroneous mode. I finally got out, and found that P.P. suddenly refused to acknowledge the existence of the bottom half of every page in the document. As far as P.P. was concerned, they no longer existed. I tried many things to fix the problem, but the upshot was - one and a half hours of time blown down the commode.

I bit my lip and loaded the previous version of the document. I once again began shrinking columns and planting pictures. Then I tried to "link" two columns together, a normal P.P. task. I made the mistake of placing the little "page" symbol over some words on the next page. I figured P.P. would naturally add the overflow text from the previous page IN FRONT of the text on the other page. I was wrong. Two bomb icons (P.P.'s little way of saying "you can't do that" is to bomb the system. You blink in horror as the desktop comes on screen to greet you). Another half-hour wasted.

The upshot of all this is; I'm sick and tired of P.P.'s user-antagonistic bugs. I feel it is irresponsible for a software developer to put a product out that is as full of bugs as this program. I also think that it is irresponsible to let a program just dump you to the desktop when an error is made. Haven't the programmers at Softlogic ever heard of Error Trapping - little pieces of code that see an error and tell you something like "Sorry, you made and incorrect choice, please make another selection."

Call this a review of sorts. If you have plenty of time to P.P. away - use Publishing Partner, it's just great for that. If you don't have a lot of time to throw down the drain. Use something else like Easy Draw (which has almost all the features P.P. has). Nuf Said.

Yours in Disgust. Jerry Mc Bride - Editor

B4D NEWS

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